

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resource Commission**

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**ITEM**

**12**

**INFORMATION**

**TOPIC**

Partnership Award – Bruce E. Van Laere, NRCS

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The Natural Resource Commission is asked to recognize the efforts of Clinton County District Conservationist Bruce Van Laere by presenting him with a Partnership Award. Partnership Awards are presented to individuals from other agencies that work cooperatively with DNR staff to achieve program goals and further natural resource protection in Iowa.

Four years ago, adjacent landowners to Goose Lake Wildlife Area near Goose Lake, Iowa, claimed that the Department's management of Goose Lake was adversely affecting their cropland. In response, the Clinton County Board of Supervisors threatened to remove a newly constructed dike and water control structure that was developed to create over 200 acres of wetland habitat to address the concerns of the adjacent landowners. To facilitate an unbiased report and resolution, the Department solicited the assistance of the Natural Resources Conservation Service to set up a water monitoring study that would help determine how the Department's management of Goose Lake was affecting ground water levels in the marsh and on adjacent private land. It was important to the credibility of this study that an agency or individual other than Department staff implement this ground water monitoring study.

Mr. Van Laere graciously agreed to assist the Department with this project. Mr. Van Laere has been employed for 29 years with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). With the assistance of NRCS engineers and soil scientists, ground water monitoring wells were established on both DNR land and adjacent private land. For the next three years, Mr. Van Laere and his staff recorded water level data from each of the three wells on two week intervals. Mr. Van Laere plotted the data and provided expert analysis of the results that were then reported to the Clinton County Board of Supervisors. His excellent working relationship with landowners and the Board of Supervisors, his thorough knowledge of Clinton County and its soils, and the professionalism he exhibited in the analysis of the water monitoring data were paramount to the success of this project. His findings identified that adjacent landowners are not affected by the Department's management of the Goose Lake Wildlife Area water levels.

It is with great pleasure that we recognize Clinton County District's Natural Resources Conservationist Bruce Van Laere with our Partnership Award in appreciation for his exceptional efforts in helping DNR resolve a potentially volatile issue.

Ken Herring, Administrator  
Conservation and Recreation Division  
October 9, 2008